

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

Yit hath the merveilous cristal
Swich strengthe, that the place owerl,
Bothe fowland tree, and leues grene,
And al the yerd in it is sene.
And for to doon you understonde,
To make ensample wol I fonde;
Right as a mirour openly
Sheweth al thing that stant therby,
As wel the colour as the figure,
Withouthen any coverture;
Right so the cristal stoon, shynig,
Withouthen any disceyving,
The estres of the yerde accuseth
To him that in the water museth;
For ever, in which half that he be,
He may wel half the gardin see;
And if he turne, he may right wel
Seen the remenaunt everydel.
For ther is noon so litel thing
So hid, ne closed with shitting,
That it ne is sene, as though it were
Peynted in the cristal there.

THIS is the mirour perilous,
In which the proude Narcissus
Saw al his face fair and bright,
That made him sith to lye upright,
for whoso loke in that mirour,
Ther may nothing ben his socour
That he ne shal ther seen som thing
That shal him lede into loving.
ful many a worthy man hath it
Yblent; for folk of grettest wit
Ben sone caught here and awayted;
Withouthen respyt been they bayted.
Heer comth to folk of newe rage,
Heer chaungeth many wight corage;
Heer lyth no reed ne wit therto;
for Venus sone, daun Cupido,
hath sownen there of love the seed,
That help ne lyth ther noon, ne reed,
So cercleth it the welle aboute.
His ginnes hath he set withoute
Right for to cacche in his panteres
These damoyseles and bacheleres.
Love will noon other bridde cacche,
Though he sette either net or lacche.
And for the seed that heer was sownen,
This welle is cleped, as wel is knownen,
The Welle of Love, of verray right,
Of which ther hath ful many a wight
Spoke in bokes dyversely.
But they shulle never so verily
Descripicioun of the welle here,
Ne eek the sothe of this matere,
As ye shulle, whan I have undo
The craft that hir bilongeth to.

ALWAY me lyked for to dwelle,
To seen the cristal in the welle,
That shewed me ful openly
A thousand thinges faste by.
But I may saye, in sory houre
Stood I to loken or to poure;
for sithen have I sore syked,
That mirour hath me now entryked.
But hadde I first knowen in my wit

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The vertue and the strengthe of it,
I nolde not have mused there;
Me hadde bet ben elleswhere;
for in the snare I fel anon,
That hath bitraissed many oon.

IN thilke mirour saw I tho,
Among a thousand thinges mo,
A Roser charged ful of roses,
That with an hegge aboute enclos
is.

THO had I swich lust and envye,
That, for Darys ne for Darye,
Nolde I have left to goon and see
Ther grettest hepe of roses be.
Whan I was with this rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go,
And whan I was not fer therfro,
The savour of the roses swote
Me smoot right to the herte rote,
As I hadde al embawmed be.
And if I ne hadde endouted me
To have ben hated or assailed,
My thanks, wolde I not have failed
To pulle a rose of al that route
To beren in myn honde aboute,
And smellen to it wher I wente;
But ever I dredde me to repente,
And lest it greved or forthoughte
The lord that thilke gardyn wroughte.
Of roses were ther gret woon,
So faire wexe never in roon.
Of knoppes clos, som saw I there,
And some wel beter woxen were;
And some ther been of other moysoun,
That drowe nigh to hir sesoun,
And spedde hem faste for to sprede;
I love wel swiche roses rede;
for brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two;
But knoppes wilen fresshe be
Two dayes atte leest, or three.
The knoppes gretly lyked me,
for fairer may ther no man see.
Whoso mighte haven oon of alle,
It oughte him been ful leef withalle.
Mighte I a gerlond of hem geten,
for no richesse I wolde it leten.
Among the Knoppes I chees oon
So fair, that of the remenaunt noon
Ne preyse I half so wel as it,
Whan I layse it in my wit.
for it so wel was enlumyned
With colour reed, as wel yfyned
As nature couthe it make faire.
And it had lewes wel fourre paire,
That Kinde had set through his knowing
Aboute the rede rose springing.
The stalke was as risshe right,
And thereon stood the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no syde.
The swote smelle sprong so wyde
That it dide al the place aboute...

Thus far Geoffrey Chaucer; what follows is
thought to be by another hand.



WHAN I had smelled
the savour swote,
No wille hadde I fro
thens yit go,
But somdel neer it
wente I tho,
To take it; but myn
hond, for drede,
Ne dorste I to the
rose bede,

for thistels sharpe, of many maneres,
Netles, thornes, and hoked breres;
fulmuche they distourbled me,
for sore I dradde to harmed be.

The God of Love, with bowe bent, **The God of Love**
That al day set hadde his talent
To pursuen and to spyen me,
Was stonding by a fige tree.
And whan he sawe how that I
had chosen so ententilly
The botoun, more unto my pay
Than any other that I say,
he took an arowe ful sharply whet,
And in his bowe whan it was set,
he streight up to his ere drough
The stronge bowe, that was so tough,
And shet at me so wonder smerte,
That through myn eye unto myn herte

The takel smoot, and depe it wente.
And therewithal such cold me hente,
That, under clothes warme and softe,
Sith that day I have chevered ofte.

WHAN I was hurt thus in that
stounde,
I fel down plat unto the grounde,
Myn herte failed and feynted ay,
And long tyme theraswone I
lay.

But whan I com out of swoning,
And hadde wit, and my feling,
I was al maat, and wende ful wel
Of blood have loren a ful gret del.
But certes, the arowe that in me stood
Of me drew no drope of blood,
for why I found my wounde al drewe.

THAN took I with myn hondis tweye
The arowe, and ful fast out it plight,
And in the pulling sore I sight.

SO at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the fethers three.
But yet the hoked heed, ywis,
The whiche Beautee callid is, **Beautee**
Gan so depe in myn herte passe,
That I it mighte nought arace;
But in myn herte stille it stood,
Al bledde I not a drope of blood.